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16 March 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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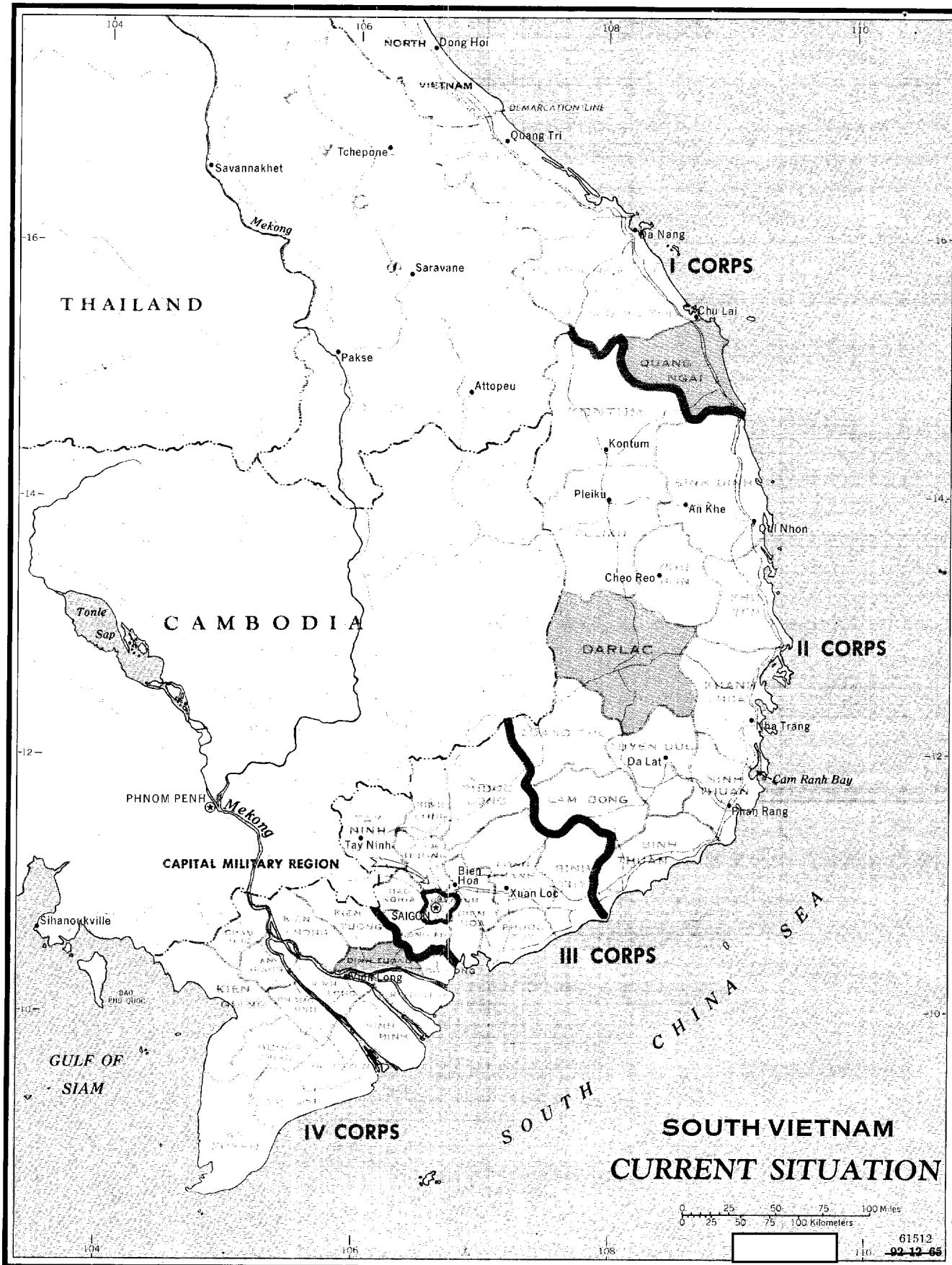
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

The Political Situation in South Vietnam: The government is taking a calculated risk in an effort to curb the continuing political unrest in I Corps by permitting General Thi to return to the area.

Thi arrived in Da Nang this morning in the company of National Police director Lieu, a long-time associate, and Military Security Service chief Loan, a trusted Ky supporter. [Thi is expected to remain in Da Nang for two days and to attempt to reconcile military and regional authorities there to the views of the central government. Loan has said that after Thi's departure there will be a roundup of middle- and low-level leaders of the demonstrations.]

Thi's presence, however, could further inflame the situation. In Da Nang yesterday there was a generally effective strike by workers and shopkeepers. There was also a meeting attended by approximately 5,000 soldiers and civilians in the city's central square where speakers urged the removal of Chief of State Thieu and a return to civilian government as well as the reinstatement of General Thi. Considerable local official support for the meeting was evident, including speeches by military officers.

[According to local police officials in I Corps, a Buddhist demonstration scheduled for this morning in Hué will demand civilian elections and an end to military government. The demonstration may draw more than 10,000 persons. Attempts are also being made to wage a general strike in the city.]

Acting I Corps commander General Chuan, whose position remains somewhat ambiguous, yesterday told the press that he had taken no severe measures because there had been no violence and no evidence of Viet Cong

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involvement. [] he indicated reluctance to act against the demonstrations in view of increasing Buddhist participation. Chuan felt that if strong action were to be taken, it should be done in Saigon where the Buddhist leadership resides.

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[There are reports that demonstrations may spread to Saigon later this week. [] Buddhist laymen are now printing anti-government posters and leaflets demanding Thi's reinstatement and a return to revolutionary principles.]

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The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Early yesterday, an estimated battalion of Viet Cong unsuccessfully attacked a government position about 40 miles south of Saigon in Dinh Tuong Province. A reaction force of six South Vietnamese battalions subsequently established enemy contact, which was reported continuing yesterday afternoon. Interim reports list government casualties of nine killed and 39 wounded; Viet Cong losses are reported as 22 killed.

On 14 March, South Vietnamese troops outmaneuvered three companies of Viet Cong attempting to ambush a government convoy in Quang Ngai Province. Government troops located the enemy position before the convoy reached the point of ambush, and with tactical air and naval gunfire support killed 75 Viet Cong. Government losses were 30 killed and two wounded.

A battalion of the US 25th Infantry Division conducting a search-and-destroy operation in the central highlands province of Darlac yesterday clashed with an estimated Viet Cong platoon. US casualties were ten killed and 25 wounded against 33 Viet Cong killed.

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Indonesia: Army commander Suharto continues to be indecisive in exercising his new political authority.

Contrary to repeated reports of action against leftist cabinet ministers, no arrests appear to have been made.

[the timing for a further major political move is unclear.]

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General Suharto's hesitation appears based partly on President Sukarno's questioning of the extent of authority he conferred on the army leader on [2] March. [Sukarno also continues his efforts to reduce support for Suharto within the army. Army officers at various levels are concerned about Suharto's procrastination, fearing that it affords Sukarno time to maneuver and perhaps even to regain the initiative.]

Student groups apparently plan to continue a program of public action. Their intent presumably is to press the army to take further political moves. They staged an impressive parade in Djakarta on 14 March, participated in a pro-Suharto rally there yesterday, and are reported to be planning to invade several ministries headed by pro-Communists within the next few days.

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NOTES

Ghana: The new military regime has indicated that it may soon ask the UK, Canada, and Australia for six to eight fighter planes and crews. General Ankrah has expressed concern that the Guinea-based Nkrumah may attempt to air-drop insurgents into Ghana. The regime has also asked Canada for \$150, 000 worth of spare parts for 15 light transport aircraft, many of which have been grounded since last fall.

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NATO: [The UK's revised draft declaration in support of an integrated NATO emerged without change from a meeting of 14 NATO members on 14 March. Some representatives still had to obtain approval of their governments and Italy's acceptance is not expected before tomorrow at the earliest. At Canada's initiative, and to obtain withdrawal of amendments suggested by Turkey and Portugal, the delegates agreed that any member government would be free to issue official comments on the declaration.]

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The Special Assistant for National Security Affairs

The Scientific Adviser to the President

The Director of the Budget

The Department of State

The Secretary of State

The Under Secretary of State

The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Counselor and Chairman of the Policy Planning Council

The Director of Intelligence and Research

The Treasury Department

The Secretary of the Treasury

The Under Secretary of the Treasury

The Department of Defense

The Secretary of Defense

The Deputy Secretary of Defense

The Secretary of the Army

The Secretary of the Navy

The Secretary of the Air Force

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs)

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Chief of Naval Operations, United States Navy

Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

Chief of Staff, United States Army

Commandant, United States Marine Corps

U.S. Rep., Military Committee and Standing Group, NATO

Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

Commander in Chief, Pacific

Commander in Chief, Atlantic

The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

The Director, The Joint Staff

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Department of Justice

The Attorney General

The Federal Bureau of Investigation

The Director

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

The Administrator

The Atomic Energy Commission

The Chairman

The National Security Agency

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The United States Information Agency

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